

SHero Award



MARY JANE FOSTER

As President & CEO of Interval House, Ms. Foster has led the State's largest domestic violence agency through a year of extraordinary demand. The pandemic has wreaked havoc on victims of domestic violence; the stressors of socioeconomic turmoil – home isolation, job loss and plummeting household income, school closures, food scarcity, and the threat of eviction have created a breeding ground for abuse in many homes. But thanks to Mary Jane's strong leadership, between March and December 2020 Interval House managed over 9,000 victim calls – a 24% spike in incoming hotline calls and an 83% increase in outgoing calls to check in on clients. The agency provided 7,506 bed nights (a 24% increase year over year) to 165 adults and children in their safe house and hotels, provided 25,203 meals – a 10% increase from the year prior – and distributed grocery gift cards to more than 100 families in need. Additionally, Mary Jane's client-based vision led to a new strategic partnership with the West Hartford police department – the fourth of its kind for the agency. As a result, Interval House has managed 2,091 connections with high risk victims during the pandemic – a 196% increase year over year and an effort that has undeniably saved lives. She is a true champion of her fellow women – those women the agency assists, as well as her staff. The teamwork and dedication to the job that she inspires has resulted in not only successes in service delivery amid a year of unprecedented challenge it spurred a 25% increase in fundraising in 2020 to help cover the cost of rising demand.